

## Article

# Glocalization and the Marketing of Christianity in Early Modern Southeast Asia<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** The expansion of European commercial interests into Southeast Asia during the early modern period was commonly justified by the biblical injunction to spread Christian teachings, and by the “civilizing” influences it was said to foster. In focusing on areas where Christianity gained a foothold or, in the Philippines and Timor Leste, became the dominant faith, this article invokes the marketing concept of “glocalization”, frequently applied to the sociology of religion. It argues that the historical beginnings of the processes associated with the global/local interface of Christianity are situated in the sixteenth century, when Europe, Asia and the Americas were finally linked through maritime connections. Christian missionizing was undertaken with the assumption that the European-based “brand” of beliefs and practices could be successfully transported to a very different environment. However, the application of these ideas was complicated by the goal of imposing European economic control, by the local resistance thus generated, and by competition with other religions and among Christians themselves. In this often antagonistic environment, the degree to which a global product could be “repackaged” and “glocalized” so that it was appealing to consumers in different cultural environments was always constrained, even among the most sympathetic purveyors. As a result, the glocalization of Christianity set up “power-laden tensions” which both global institutions and dispersed consumers continue to negotiate.

**Keywords:** Christianity; globalization; glocalization; early modern; Southeast Asia

The literature on the nature of the processes we have termed “globalization” has expanded exponentially since the term began to gain currency in the 1970s. Much of the theoretical material has discussed globalization in terms of its connections to modernity, the dominating theme in studies of the 20th century ([1]; [2], pp. 138–45). Although academic debates about the fundamental characteristics of globalization are ongoing, and although there is a diversity of opinions, for the purposes of this article the early definition by Anthony Giddens is still useful. For Giddens, the essence of globalization lies in “the intensification of worldwide social relations which links distinct localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring miles away and vice versa” ([3], p. 64). If we take this statement as a departure point, even with qualifications, it is quite possible to agree with those historians who argue that the foundations of twentieth century globalization were laid down in the period reaching from 1500 to about 1800, now increasingly termed “early modern”.

This is not to equate such global connections with “modernity” per se, nor to ignore the scholarship which argues that the world had already been connected by flows of people, goods, technologies and ideas ([4], pp. 31–36; [5]). However, notwithstanding continuing debate, there is growing agreement that the sustained “interchange and interdependency” central to the concept of globalization did not begin to reshape world history until the sixteenth century ([6], pp. 418–21; [7], pp. 34–35; [8], p. 8).

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The circumnavigation of the globe and regular voyages across the Pacific meant that Europe, the Americas, Asia and Africa were linked in what has been described as the “first” globalization [9]. Despite some reservations about the applicability of an “early modern” period in societies beyond Western Europe and the Americas, historians agree that this was a time of unprecedented and world-wide change ([10]; [11], pp. 5–10). Because of Southeast Asia’s longstanding involvement in international trade, it follows that the region inevitably became a player in “a genuinely global periodization of world history” ([11], pp. 336–43; [12], p. 769). The expanding interactions that characterize this period are central to discussions of religious change in Southeast Asia because of the spread of Islam and Christianity. In tandem with increased trade networks, both faiths introduced new connectivities that scholars of contemporary religious plurality have characterized by the fashionable but inelegant amalgam, “glocalization” ([13], pp. 98–118).

Introduced by Japanese economists in the late 1980s, the concept of *dochakaku* (“global localization”) became one of the “marketing buzzwords” of the late twentieth century, and in 1991 was added to the Oxford Dictionary as an acceptable “new word” ([14], p. 134). In business circles “glocalization” is used to describe a product or service that is developed centrally but distributed globally through a re-fashioning to accommodate consumers in different types of markets. Though its relationship with “globalization” continues to generate debate [15–17], “glocalization” has been adopted by sociologists to deepen discussions of the ways in which local contexts temper global pressures. It has also been incorporated into the sociology of religion, extending work on global modernities and helping to theorize the ways in which transnational networks can reach out to specific congregations ([18], pp. 32–43; [19,20]). Studies of various cultures have shown that religious “goods” were not necessarily consumed in the manner elite producers expected, and local actors appropriated the “product” in ways that often led to unintended consequences ([19]; [21], pp. 56–57). The concept of glocalization, Peter Ng argues, is preferable to terms such “inculturation” and “accommodation” because it recognizes both local and global perspectives and allows for more attention to interaction in a mutually beneficial and “harmonious” relationship ([18], pp. 6, 32, 222). Nonetheless, the marketing analogy reminds us that there are limits to the extent to which any product can be “glocalized”, since a global brand must be internationally recognizable, and the extent of adaptation to a local environment is thus constrained. In the religious setting such constraints were reinforced by the fact that teachings presented as universally applicable were transmitted by agents of societies where religious praxis, aesthetics and modes of worship were regarded as intrinsically superior to those of the receiving culture.

In Southeast Asia these comments are particularly relevant to any regional analysis of the spread of Christianity in the early modern period. The ongoing process of localization is as evident among local converts as it is among followers of other world religions, but the transfer of influences from Southeast Asia to Europe that are implied in the “vice versa” of the Giddens definition is not easily tracked. For instance, in Southeast Asia we rarely see the type of missionary adaptation to local practices displayed by the Jesuits in China, Japan or India. While the situation in Vietnam is something of an exception, conversions in Southeast Asia were confined to areas where Europeans wielded economic and political power, so that the relationship between clerical authority and native Christians was fundamentally asymmetrical. This asymmetry was furthered by the dominance of what can be described as “alpha” cities, a term used in urban studies in reference to places like New York, London, Paris, and Tokyo that are considered nodes in the global economic system and purveyors of international culture. As Christianity moved out into the non-European world, the major sites of European control in Asia—Goa, Melaka, Manila, Macau and Batavia—developed to become the Christian “alphas” by acting as religious conduits and arbiters. From these new religious enclaves individuals and sacred objects moved and circulated as vehicles for the globalizing influences of Christianity, reinforcing the idea of an interlinked and supra-national community. The dominance of these European-controlled cities and the forms of Christianity they espoused remained an unsettling

challenge to the mutuality of global-local interaction that some scholars of religion have seen as the basis of glocalization ([18], p. 43).

In sum, historians of religion have found the academic exchanges that highlight the global/glocal relationship particularly helpful in grounding theory in a specific cultural context. In today's business environment multinational companies are constantly alert to any attempt to counterfeit a product, or to change core elements such as the logo or a distinctive packaging that might dilute universal recognition. Similarly, in Asia, Africa and the Americas the concept of the essential universality of Christianity was repeatedly pitted against missionary beliefs that new Christian communities should as far as possible replicate the established practices of Europe. In Southeast Asia as elsewhere the idea that Christians were members of a potent "world religion" operated simultaneously to facilitate the conversion process while placing limits on the extent to which missionaries could enculturate themselves and their teachings. By applying the notion of glocalization to historical situations in early modern Southeast Asia, this article is thus concerned to demonstrate the very real ways in which Christian concerns to maintain their "brand" restrained patterns of local adaptation.

### 1. Christianity, Global Influences and "Alpha" Cities in Early Modern Southeast Asia

From the beginning of the sixteenth century, as the spread of Christianity became enmeshed in the European goal of commercial profit, religious networks in Southeast Asia were reshaped. European-controlled cities maintained much older trading connections, but also generated international links that transformed them into junctures for the dispersal of Christian influences. The development of a Portuguese seaborne empire, the *Estado da Índia*, for instance, resulted in new bonds of belief between world areas that had previously been linked only indirectly, if at all ([22]; [23], p. 121). Though frequently at odds with the Portuguese, the spread of Spanish colonialism into the Americas and the Philippines also created interlocking Catholic connections through which many different influences converged. The global mobility of the religious orders, especially the Jesuits, contributed to a shrinking world as missionaries moved between different zones of activity. In the early seventeenth century the arrival of the Dutch United East India Company (*Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*, VOC) with its Protestant affiliation certainly disrupted or diverted some of these pathways. On the other hand, new chains of religious globality connected the Reformed Church hierarchy in the Netherlands to dimly imagined communities in far-off Indonesia, where native Christians appointed as "visitors of the sick" (*krankbezoekers*) symbolized the reach of the Christian network.

In Southeast Asia, Melaka, captured by the Portuguese in 1511, serves as an example of the global evangelism that characterized Catholicism in the sixteenth century. In commercial terms, economic continuities continued, for Melaka was still one of the richest entrepôts in the east, a highly cosmopolitan town in which the Portuguese were merely a new elite. The imprint of the new Christian presence was nevertheless dramatic and indisputable, since from the outset, the Portuguese saw their venture as a battle of Christians against unbelievers; indeed, the assault on Melaka was specifically launched on the feast day of the revered Santiago Matamoros—Saint James, the slayer of Moors (i.e., Muslims). The great mosque was destroyed, and much of Melaka was rebuilt to accommodate numerous convents, churches, chapels, and other religious establishments. Visiting priests may have railed against the lack of piety among its Catholic population, but in the eyes of Southeast Asians Melaka was indubitably Christian, a meeting place for Christians from all over the region and a nexus in the sixteenth-century global missionizing project. At the same time, it was infused with an architectural style and organizational forms that were "the defining marks of Portugal's colonial cities." ([24], p. 6).

Under the Portuguese, Melaka's primary connections with India were focused on Goa. Following its conquest in 1510, Goa became the hub of the Portuguese seaborne empire and from 1558 was made an archbishopric. Appointed by the Portuguese king, the archbishop administered a region that reached from Africa to Japan, while Goa itself functioned as the dissemination point for evangelism within India and to many other places in Portugal's overseas domains. As a religious and educational

“alpha” city, seventeenth-century Goa could boast at least seventy Catholic establishments, including thirty-one churches, and by the eighteenth century the Jesuits were in charge of sixty parishes [25]. Although scholars have traced an Indo-Portuguese style in secular architecture, Goa’s churches generally followed European models closely while infusing them with the glocalized message of Christian triumph. The Sé cathedral, for instance, was built with its counterpart in Valladolid in mind, but the high altar displayed a painting of the martyred Saint Catherine of Alexandria (on whose feast day Goa was captured) standing on the body of the Sultan of Bijapur ([26], pp. 36–43).

In the latter half of the sixteenth century Melaka gained additional religious importance as a half-way station between India, Japan, and Macau. The latter had been established as a Portuguese trading base in 1557, with the permission of the Ming Emperor. The connections made possible through this maritime route are well illustrated in the celebrated encounter between the Spanish Jesuit, Francis Xavier, and the Japanese Anjiro, a merchant from Kagoshima. When they met in Melaka, Anjiro expressed interest in conversion and was therefore sent to study in Goa. After his baptism, he accompanied Xavier back to Japan, again passing through Melaka ([27], pp. 1–9). Fostered by personal interaction, the networks traversing Portuguese Asia were so resilient that they survived the anti-Catholic fervour accompanying the Protestant Dutch capture of Melaka in 1641. By 1712, when the Dutch allowed greater freedom of worship, Melaka’s Catholics outnumbered Protestants by six to one, and even though successive bishops had taken refuge in Flores and Timor, Melaka continued to be a diocesan town until 1818 ([28], p. 55).

However, the fact that after 1641 Melaka was controlled by a Protestant administration did mean a lessening of ties with Macau, which was under Goa but operated semi-independently. Although “a Catholic island in a Chinese sea”, existing at the pleasure of the Ming dynasty, Macau developed into a centre for Portuguese operations in East Asia, most clearly evident in its multi-ethnic population. The Portuguese-born community was always small, and because of the lack of Portuguese women, the wives of European residents were variously Eurasian, Chinese converts, Christian Japanese exiles, or baptized former slaves from places such as Timor, Java, Makassar and India [29]. As a Catholic “alpha” in its own right, Macau was seen as the door to the Christianization of China and Japan, and thus the most suitable site for two Jesuit colleges similar to that already established in Goa. The Franciscan and Dominican friars, the Poor Clare nuns, and the Augustinians also established religious institutions in Macau. Missionaries hoping to spread Christianity in Vietnam, China and Japan viewed Macau as a bulwark of the faith and a source of financial support; donations from Macau even helped the Dominicans build a fortress on the distant Indonesian island of Solor ([30], p. 13).

The wealth that came to Macau’s Lusitanian merchants and to the religious orders helped finance religious buildings and charitable foundations, transforming the town into a showcase of Catholic architecture and a critical point of connectivity as Catholicism moved to become a world religion. Begun in 1602, the impressive Madre de Deus Church (today only a façade) was probably modelled after the Gesù, a Jesuit church in Rome, but it also replicated artistic features common in the Iberian Peninsula while exhibiting aspects reminiscent of the architecture of Portuguese India. When Peter Mundy arrived in the early seventeenth century he expressed his admiration for the workmanship of the Chinese-made roof, the “spacious ascent [of] many steppes” and the “new faire frontispiece” ([31], pp. 162–63). It is nonetheless unlikely that he appreciated the symbolism of the façade, a “sermon in stone” that portrays the globalization project through depicting (as the Chinese characters inform us), and “The Holy Mother trampling on the dragon’s head”. In European art the dragon was a symbol of heresy, but in China it connoted benevolence and as such had been adopted as the Ming emblem. At a time when the Ming Empire was beginning to crumble, this could be read as the glocal expression of a triumphant and European-driven enterprise that would overwhelm the barbarism of the East. Nevertheless, artistic protocols were uncompromising. Even the three statues of Mary are in accordance with a Vatican-approved style. Mary should be represented as a young woman in a white robe and a blue cloak, with her hands in an attitude of prayer, or folded over the breast ([32], pp. 84–99).

While the final closure of the Japanese market in 1639 was a financial disaster for many Macau merchants, it did mean a revival of older links with Southeast Asia. The majority of Macau's traders were Luso-Asians who had close links with the "black Portuguese" diaspora in Southeast Asia, and a Malay chronicle from Borneo even mentions "Macau people" as a specific group ([33], p. 561). By the eighteenth century Catholic communities in eastern Indonesia were thus inclined to see Macau, rather than Goa, as the symbol of Portuguese power in Asia. In 1772 a French visitor to eastern Timor commented that most chiefs were Catholic, that he had seen a church in virtually all the coastal villages, and that trade with the Macau Chinese was thriving ([34], pp. 94–95, 97–98).

Rivalling Macau in the number of its religious buildings was another alpha centre, Spanish Manila. The walled centre, the *Intramuros*, enclosed the convents and churches of six major religious orders, and the opulence of its architecture aroused comments from many visitors. Though successive earthquakes necessitated modification to the towers and spires that typified Spanish Gothic cathedrals in Seville or Toledo, the town plan replicated typical arrangements in other Spanish colonies, laid down by royal orders in 1573 in an early attempt to "globalize" architecture [35]. Spanish repression of indigenous trade meant Manila never became an entrepôt like Melaka, but it attracted a highly cosmopolitan population and was a telling symbol of Spain's Asian presence. Most importantly, it was a key node in the new path of communication across the Pacific, a central point for the Acapulco-Manila-Macau-Nagasaki links by which Chinese silk and porcelain were exchanged for Japanese and American silver. The so-called Galleon Trade also established a pathway for religious interaction as well. A Jesuit mission was established on Guam in 1668 and for a hundred years became a significant point of connection on the Pacific route between Acapulco and Manila ([8], pp. 58–60; [36]).

Standing apart from these four Catholic-controlled centres was Batavia, taken by the VOC in 1619. The Dutch maritime empire arose in the context of commercial ambition and trade rivalries with the Iberian powers, behind which lay the legacy of Dutch conflict with Catholic Spain and the conviction that Calvinist Protestantism conveyed the true message of Christianity. The VOC charter of 1602 said nothing about the promotion of religion, but the company's directors instructed the first Governor-General not merely to determine which areas in the Indonesian archipelago were best suited for trade, but also to identify places where Christian evangelism was possible. The VOC did not formally accept responsibility for missionizing, but it was obligated to maintain "public belief", by which was meant support for reformed Calvinism ([37], pp. 21–22). Though rarely enforced, the statutes of Batavia thus laid down that only the Reformed Church had the right to propagate in Dutch-controlled areas and individuals found guilty of flouting this order, whether Christian, Moor or "heathen", could be put in jail, banned or even lose their lives.

As the centre for VOC operations, Batavia's commercial pre-eminence was confirmed by the extension of pre-existing trade routes and by linking previously unconnected places like the Cape of Good Hope and Java. For many Dutch Protestants, the VOC's global reach provided an unprecedented opportunity to take the gospel to remote nations and to combat the global spread of Papist "superstitions" and "blasphemies". Dutch gravestones still surviving in Melaka are a reminder of the new connections Protestantism established. Maria Quevelferius (1629–1664), we are told, was the wife of Johannes Riebeck, previously governor of the Cape of Good Hope and subsequently of Melaka. She was born at Rotterdam, educated in Leiden, married in Schiedam, and now lies "in this tomb [in Melaka]" ([38], p. 63).

## 2. Globalizing Connectivities

The Christian influences that moved through these alpha centres and globalizing networks were in the first instance carried by individuals. The most renowned is Francis Xavier, whose travels through Asia are memorialized in statues and shrines, in names attached to schools, and in his tomb in the Church of Bom Jesus, Goa. But there are other lesser known personalities whose peregrinations also had far reaching results. For example, at the age of 66, Mother Jerónima de la Asunción (1555–1630) left her birthplace, Toledo, to travel to Manila where she had permission to establish the first religious



community for women. Her long journey by land and sea from Spain to the Philippines lasted over a year, and her “global renown” and reputation for saintliness created a public demand for her images not only in the Philippines but in Mexico and Spain itself. ([39], pp. 147–48; [40]). Another such traveller was François Caron (1634–1706), born in Hirado to a French father and a Japanese Catholic mother. Sent back to the Netherlands to complete his studies in theology, he arrived in the Indies as a Protestant minister in 1660. Caron spent thirteen years in Ambon before finally returning to the Netherlands where he published forty sermons that were recycled back to the Indonesian archipelago. His “Kitab Krong” (Caron book) became standard use in Protestant church services well into the nineteenth century [41].

For local converts these Christian connections fostered emotional attachments to distant religious hierarchies and to a heritage of saintly protectors, reminding believers of the global spread of this new faith. In Goa three of the four bronze reliefs around Francis Xavier’s tomb depict the saint preaching and baptizing not in India but in far-off eastern Indonesia, where he is also shown escaping from hostile islanders ([26], p. 66). Filipinos celebrated the holy days of devout men and women who had lived long ago in far-away countries, Japanese boys took gifts to the Pope in Rome, and Timorese chiefs, baptized as Protestants, inserted orange flowers in their headdresses to celebrate the birth of a Dutch prince ([42,43]; [44], p. 93). Sometimes bestowed, sometimes personally selected, the baptismal names of converts proclaimed personalized and meaningful ties with the saintly figures of Christianity’s larger world. The Japanese Christian Anjio was thus baptized as Paulo de Santa Fê (Paul of the Holy Faith), after the saint known as the Apostle to the Gentiles; in the Philippines, a well-born Hispanized Filipina accepted into the Manila convent of the Poor Clares in 1631 took the devotional name of Martha de San Bernardo, recalling Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153), a medieval theologian who was dedicated to the veneration of Mary ([27], pp. 1–9; [45], pp. 68–69). Protestantism, with its abhorrence of saint worship, had no such traditions, but converts were given new “Dutch” names, and a Ternate Sultan, anxious to demonstrate his loyalty to the VOC, called one son “Amsterdam” and another “Rotterdam”.

The movement along these Christian circuits took many different forms. Catholic Indians and Eurasians were used by the missionary orders throughout much of Southeast Asia, and around 1741, when a seminary was set up in Timor, two members of an Indian order, the Oratorians, were sent as teachers ([46], pp. 42, 69, 422). Although the VOC employed only a very small number of Indians and Ceylonese as ministers, some Eurasians did go to the Netherlands for theological training ([37], p. 171; [47], p. 78).

As Christianized alpha cities became key points on a reshaped Asian landscape, places controlled by sympathetic believers became places of refuge when Christians faced banishment or persecution as in China, Vietnam and Japan. In 1614, for instance, a group of Japanese *beatas* sought protection in a convent in Manila to escape Tokugawa suppression [48]. The sectarian animosities that divided Catholics and Protestants could also create religious refugees, and Macau provided asylum for many Catholics who fled from Melaka and other areas taken by the Dutch in the seventeenth century. In Vietnam, where Christian communities were constantly under threat, wider missionary connections could be effectively employed to relocate institutions and personnel. Despite the rivalry between the Iberian-dominated religious orders and the French Société des Missions Étrangères de Paris (MEP), in 1769 the Franciscans in Vietnam helped MEP missionaries and eighteen students to escape to Dutch-controlled Melaka, and from thence to India, where their college was re-established at Pondicherry ([49], p. 117).

In many alpha cities the proliferation of Christian shrines, tombs and churches provided a meeting ground for people of very different origins, and encouraged travel to quite distant places. After their ship arrived safely in Acapulco around 1595, for example, Filipino sailors made the three-hundred kilometre journey to give thanks at the basilica of the Virgin of Guadalupe ([50], p. 374, n. 26). Nor did the individuals who travelled along these pathways come empty handed. Crucifixes, rosaries, bibles, psalm books, musical instruments, religious vestments, were all infused with multiple possibilities

of imagining “globality”, and most had the advantage of being light and easy to transport. Even the VOC, virulently opposed to “Popish” idolatry, found it profitable to trade in pictures of the Virgin and Mary Magdalene ([51], p. 103). Lifelike religious images were accorded a special place as sources of benevolence and protection, like the Virgin carried from Manila to south-eastern India’s “fishery coast” in 1555 to become the Mother of the Parava fishing caste ([52], p. 52). The famed statue of Bunda Maria (Mother Mary) in Larantuka (Flores) is commonly believed to have miraculously arrived from Melaka, but it probably originated in late eighteenth century Manila, reaching Larantuka via Portuguese Macau [53]. The most well-travelled Marian image, the Virgin of Antipolo, was brought to Manila from Mexico in 1626. Because she was credited with special powers some captains gained permission to have her on board their ships, and over the next century she made eight voyages back and forth across the Pacific ([54], p. 14).

In the Catholic environment the distribution of relics provides another example of how religious belief could promote the sense of a global community. In 1572 the Bishop of Melaka, Gregorio de Santa Luzia, took to Goa a relic of the True Cross of Christ that had been sent from Rome. It was displayed in the procession inside a magnificent reliquary in the form of a golden cross ([55], p. 51). From 1633 the Tokugawa “closure” of Japan ended direct relations with Portuguese Melaka, but new emotional links were established through the bones of Christians martyred in Japan, and the distribution of these relics to other places. In Macau the remains of 72 martyrs (58 Japanese and 14 Vietnamese), including 15 women are still preserved in the crypt of St Paul’s Church ([55], pp. 49–51; [56]). In the adjacent college a full length portrait of the martyrdom of the young catechist Andrew Phu-yen, executed in 1644, which was said to inspire great devotion among all who saw it ([55], p. 80; [57], p. 207). One of the most revered of these linkages again involves Francis Xavier. From the early seventeenth century his body, entombed in Goa, was treated as “a quarry of relics”; an arm was sent to Rome, and in 1619 three bones from the elbow to the shoulder were extracted; one was sent to the southern part of Vietnam, another to Melaka, and a third shipped to Japan, and then to Macau ([57], p. 205). Indeed, in the view of the writer Antônio Vieira (1608–1697), the distribution of Xavier’s relics was a symbol that all Catholics occupied “the same world” ([26], p. 65). Newly converted Protestants whose religious talismans were now condemned as “papist”, hungered for other tangible sources of protection. In the absence of crucifixes, rosaries and holy images, “permitted” products such as the Bible, psalters, books of sermons and catechisms, assumed a sacral status, in part because they were written in a “secret” (poor romanized Malay) language that few could read or understand.

Probably the most effective medium for the promotion of Christianity as a universal faith that could encompass all cultures was education. In the sixteenth century the Jesuit college of St Paul in Goa became a major site for the globalization project, and its reputation grew rapidly. Opened in 1542, the seminary included non-Portuguese boys from all over Asia and Africa, with the idea that the most promising would be trained as secular priests. Just three years after its opening a Portuguese merchant from Melaka brought “four brown boys” from Makassar to join a student body that was increasingly cosmopolitan, representing at least thirteen different ethnicities. By the early seventeenth century over two thousand pupils were enrolled ([58], pp. 45–46; [59], pp. 256–58; [60], p. 521). The Goa seminary formed the model for similar institutions in Melaka, which attracted students from various parts of the region, including a prince from Flores ([61], p. 95). One of the most well-known products of an “Asian” schooling was Manuel Godinho de Erédia (1563–1623), who was born in Melaka, his father Portuguese and his mother a Makassar woman of good birth who had adopted Christianity. Educated in Melaka and at the Jesuit seminary at Goa, Erédia became a cartographer of considerable repute and author of one of the best early accounts of the Malay Peninsula. It is likely that the French Société des Missions Étrangères had the Goa model in mind when two priests established a college in Ayudhya (Siam) in 1664, which trained students not only from Siam but from Tonkin, China, and Cochinchina ([22], p. 36; [49], p. 208).

Though Manila became a centre for post-primary education, the colleges that sometimes admitted well-born Filipinos were primarily intended to serve residents of the Philippines and were never

envisaged as regional institutions like those in Goa, Macau, Melaka or even Ayudhya. The ambitions of the VOC-sponsored schools set up in Batavia and elsewhere in the archipelago were also more modest. In the first flush of enthusiasm, it was thought that a Christian education was best imparted in Europe, and in the early seventeenth century a number of boys from eastern Indonesia were sent to the Netherlands to learn Dutch and be introduced to Dutch life style. By the 1620s, however, the program was deemed unsuccessful and it was decided to teach students in their own country ([37], pp. 90, 95). Proposals to educate sons of traditional leaders as Dutch-speaking Protestant leaders saw few results, despite the establishment of a “Latin school” in Batavia and a short-lived seminary in 1745 ([62], pp. 44–45). The major contribution of the VOC’s educational system was the training of a cohort of primary schoolteachers in Ambon, who were posted to Christian communities throughout the eastern areas to teach the basic elements of Protestant belief, the essential prayers, and to prepare students for examination by a minister when he made his annual visit ([37], pp. 35, 57).

Ironically, the very competition to gain converts exposed deep fissures in Christianity’s touted universalism. In Southeast Asia the enmity between Protestant and Catholic was particularly evident, but internally both Christian streams were characterized by acrimonious disputes. Tensions within Catholicism that set the Jesuits (linked to Portugal) against Spanish Franciscans reflected the competition between Portuguese Melaka and Spanish Manila. The Jesuit-Dominican rivalry in Europe was transferred and re-enacted in the Philippines, where the hostility between the different religious orders often reached extreme heights. In mainland Southeast Asia national interests were similarly entangled with the missionizing enterprise. In Vietnam the priests of the Paris-based MEP, for instance, were highly critical of “Portuguese” Jesuit acceptance of baptizing “uninstructed” individuals, while the Jesuits accused their MEP rivals of ordaining Vietnamese clergy who were “ignorant and untrained” ([22], p. 137). These rivalries were intensified because descendants of liaisons between Portuguese men and local women formed the core of Christian communities in much of Southeast Asia outside the Philippines and the links between Catholicism and Portugal were consequently strong. A seventeenth-century account of Vietnam, for instance, describes a play performed in a public market place where a boy enacting the adoption of Christianity, asked whether he would “enter the belly of the Portuguese”, crept under the robe of an actor depicting a missionary from Portugal. On this occasion a watchful Jesuit said the question should be changed to “will you enter into the Christian law?” to avoid implications that Christian conversion meant becoming “Portuguese” ([63], p. 139). However, the Universalist message was persistently undermined because converts to Catholicism saw even small differences in liturgical style or pronunciation of religious terms (for instance, when Spanish Dominicans replaced Jesuits in Vietnam) as a symbol of different loyalties and even a different religion ([22], p. 137). Though less intense, rivalries divided the Protestant denominations as well. In 1742, for instance, VOC authorities gave permission for the Lutherans to build a church in Batavia, overruling strong objections from the leaders of the Dutch Reformed Church. Determined to maintain their religious monopoly, Reformed ministers proceeded to oppose Lutheran efforts to conduct baptisms, marriages and even bury their dead in their own cemetery ([61], p. 123).

Arguably, the most divisive issue for both Catholics and Protestants concerned the degree to which Christian teachings—the “product”—should be “tailored” to be more compatible with local customs and practices. The debates surrounding the acceptability of ancestor veneration for Christians in China and Vietnam and the Papal interdiction have generated much academic discussion, but as Tara Alberts has shown, refusals to condone religious compromise resurfaced in a multitude of other contexts [22]. In tandem with the conviction that “true” Christianity could not condone any concessions to “heathen practices” was the belief in European superiority and its inevitable corollary, the spiritual inferiority of non-European converts.

### 3. Globalization and Its Limitations

Debates about the degree to which Christianity should be adapted to the local environment represent a recurring theme in the history of Asian missions well into the twentieth century. In the



early modern period the difficulty of amalgamating “global” and “local” in Southeast Asia is well documented in the Catholic context, but in the Indonesian archipelago Protestant attitudes were even more implacable. Without the accommodating influences of the Jesuits and the ritualistic features that could be linked to pre-Christian practices, Protestantism as a “product” was only weakly adapted to the environment in which VOC missionaries were working ([64], p. 365). The very architecture and interior décor of Protestant churches, resembling those in Europe, offered few opportunities for the kind of modifications that might appeal to local congregations. Though less ambitious than Batavia’s imposing Kruiskerk, which was modelled after the Noorderkerk in Amsterdam, Melaka’s Christ Church made minimal concessions to local aesthetics. Well over a hundred years later Isabella Bird described it as a “prosaic Dutch meeting house” and the only visible local touch is the moustachioed face of a Dutchman on the front door ([65], p. 152; [66], pp. 49, 296). The insistence on replication of Dutch prototypes caused major problems in timber-scarce areas like Kupang (Timor), where bricks and lime were the standard building materials. In 1761 the VOC resident was forced to abandon plans to construct a church similar to the one in Batavia because of the lack of wood suitable for beams [67].

At the end of the eighteenth century the never-completed Kupang church epitomizes nearly two hundred years of the Protestant presence in eastern Indonesia. Although several of the early ministers entered the field with enthusiasm, it was never easy to attract converts or transform individuals baptized as Catholics into faithful members of the Reformed Church. Clerical authorities were adamant that liturgy as practiced in the Netherlands should be followed as closely as possible, and any compromises were therefore concerned with minor matters, such as the celebration of communion with bread made of rice rather than wheat flour ([68], pp. 33, 47). At times, it is true, incentives could be held out for conversion. In 1677, when the entire population of a village on the island of Seram was baptised, the VOC governor uncharacteristically sponsored a feast and distributed textiles to the converts “in order to arouse jealousy amongst other heathens in the surrounding area” ([69], pp. 109, 115). However, it was more common to impose fines and other punishments for dereliction of Christian duties and poor church attendance. A seemingly never-ending succession of rules and ordinances flowed out from Batavia to VOC officials and Church personnel stationed in the eastern islands, addressing issues related to such matters as pre-baptismal instruction, criteria for admission as a church member, language use, marriage arrangements, administration, finances, ministerial dress, monitoring of religious practitioners. Local schoolmasters were given responsibility for preparing individuals to be examined during the minister’s annual visit, but were not permitted to compose prayers or preach independently. In addition, the constant rotation of ministers, with very few staying for any length of time, meant that there was little familiarity with language or with local customs. A minister could even be fined if his sermon exceeded the prescribed limit, checked by an hourglass ([68], pp. 28–30). Lacking the processions, the rituals, the panoply, the holy objects of Catholicism, Protestantism had little to lure converts except musical participation, but even this was tightly controlled, with approval given only to the psalms of David and selected hymns. Because there was little room for innovation, Dutch church music did not adopt the alternating chanting more familiar to indigenous cultures, with one line read, and then people singing their response. This style was known to be an effective teaching method, but the VOC church hierarchy considered it too reminiscent of “heathen” practices and suggestions that the catechism be put into rhyme were rejected. Because indigenous musical instruments such as drums and gongs were similarly condemned, singing was normally unaccompanied, for although the main church in Batavia had an organ, none were available in eastern Indonesia ([68], p. 42). Musical instruction became part of the school curriculum, and a principal task of teachers was to guard the cupboard in hymnbooks were kept and to collect them after the lesson was over. In this sense, one could argue that musical notation and the accompanying words were effectively “owned” by the Church’s agents in the form of ministers, *krankbezoekers*, and teachers.

It would be interesting to speculate how the “glocalization” of Protestantism in eastern Indonesia might have proceeded had it not been for the re-imposition of Dutch colonial control over Christian practice in the nineteenth century. As the VOC slipped into bankruptcy the Reformed congregations

in larger centres such as Melaka and Batavia were maintained (their members, often poor women and former slaves, dependent on Church charity) but by the 1790s the Protestant presence in eastern Indonesia had largely disappeared. In 1725 there had been 23 ordained ministers in the Indies, but by 1794 only 14 (7 of whom were in Batavia) served the entire area, and escalating raiding and piracy made clerical visits between islands increasingly unsafe ([61], pp. 87, 100, n. 55). As human resources and evangelical energies declined in company with the loss of trade and the Company's looming bankruptcy, small Protestant congregations were left on their own under the direction of local schoolteachers.

These developments had far-reaching implications for the oldest Protestant community on the island of Ambon, where permanent ministers were stationed, where conversion had been more successful, and where native teachers, employed by the VOC, had become key figures in Christian evangelism. When the English took control of Maluku in 1796, this group remained loyal to "old customs" (i.e., the worship style associated with Batavia and The Netherlands). Between 1794 and 1819, when Dutch ministers were completely absent, it was the schoolteachers who maintained the traditions and practices attached to baptism and church membership. At the same time, they were already staking out their own claim as guardians of a certain style of Christian ritual. The Dutch returned in 1817, only to face a rebellion in which schoolteachers played a leading role, believing that the Dutch planned to destroy "Malukan" Christianity, and seeing themselves as defenders of piety against an unwelcome secularization ([70], p. 385). It was their scriptural knowledge that provided the uprising with its religious justification and inspiration. When one of the rebel strongholds was taken, the church bible was open at David's great invocation, Psalm 17:

I have called upon thee, for thou wilt hear me, O God . . . hide me under the shadow of thy wings, from the wicked that oppress me, from my deadly enemies, who compass me about. They are enclosed in their own fat: with their mouth they speak proudly ([61], p. 385).

The "glocalization" of early modern Catholicism would appear to be more successful, although in Southeast Asia it followed a number of different paths. On the one hand, there were areas where links to large "alpha" centres were so weakened over time that Catholic communities became independent "owners" of localized practices. For example, the expulsion of priests from Vietnam in the eighteenth century encouraged converts to assume a leadership role as mediators and interpreters of the Christian message. Two anonymous texts from the eighteenth century, "Treatise on True Religion" and "Conference of the Four Religions", were intended to prepare converts for baptism and answer the accusation that Christians neglected filial piety and were no longer loyal to their king [71]. Another example comes from Portugal's most distant territories in the Solor-Timor Archipelago, where Catholicism survived as a key marker of "Black Portuguese" (Topass) identity ([72], pp. 176, 183). When Dominican priests (often themselves of mixed Indian-Portuguese descent) were tapped for their spiritual powers, they also contributed to the Timorese domestication of Catholicism. Prior to a Topass attack on VOC-controlled Kupang in 1749, "a few priests of native complexion" baptized not only high-ranking Timor nobles, but also the soil and some sacred trees ([73], p. 142). Sponsored by the Dominicans, the Topass carried Christian banners and symbols into battle, but animal sacrifices and the drinking of blood were also performed to ensure success. Visitors to Timor noted that although local Catholics "knew little more than a few prayers", they never failed to wear a rosary or a cross around their necks as a form of protection and thus to affirm their adherence to the Christian faith ([74], pp. 8, 42).

Undoubtedly, the most effective "glocalization" of Christianity occurred in the Philippines, where the domestication of Hispanic Catholicism in virtually every aspect of Christian life has generated a corpus of historical studies. Emblematic of the manifold ways in which Catholicism was translated into a familiar cultural idiom is the Miag-ao church in Cebu. Built with the assistance of local Christians, its pediment is decorated with a bas-relief sculpture of St. Christopher—a universal Catholic icon, but here represented as a Filipino—who is carrying the Christ Child and planting a fully grown coconut palm (an attribute of the Immaculate Conception), with papaya and guava trees nearby [75]. Innumerable

other conceptualizations and their tangible representations—revered images, all with their own specific histories, celebrations associated with a particular location, pre-existing “holy places” now transformed into pilgrimage sites, theatrical presentations of religious stories—show how the dynamics of Filipino cultures successfully tamed the behemoth of Spanish Catholicism. One study of religious music in the Philippines has demonstrated the complex processes by which Filipinos actively appropriated and reshaped a musical system rooted in a very different culture [8]. While the importation of Iberian religious music was “an explicit symbol of cultural universality...in the Hispanic World”, these new styles could incorporate indigenous features and provide opportunities for local musicians to include elements that reflected the Filipino environment ([76], p. 364). The most well-known of these domesticated poetic and musical forms is the *Pasyon*, the account of the life of Christ, which established itself as an integral part of Filipino spiritual life beyond the confines of the church and fostered a sense of religious ownership through the use of indigenous languages ([8], pp. 147–53; [77]).

Nonetheless, the Philippines case shows that the very success of Catholicism’s adaptation to “consumer” culture also exposed the limits of the global project. Like their VOC counterparts, the intrusion of the Catholic Church into the personal space of local Christians was a persistent reminder that Christianity required compliance with a certain lifestyle based upon what was considered “correct” not merely in Europe, but in the colonial alpha cities. In Goa, where the much-feared Inquisition was instituted in the mid sixteenth century, prohibitions against customs such as birth or marriage ceremonies that were seen as “heathen” could touch even the minutia of ordinary life. For instance, in 1736 the Goa Inquisition ruled that Christians could not eat boiled rice without salt, or bathe wearing clothes before cooking, as Hindus did ([78], p. 192; [79]). The prohibition against the use of Hindu musical instruments is echoed in the Philippines where there were complaints that the “localization” of religious music imparted incorrect doctrine and where the friars were concerned at the theatricality and burlesque that had crept into Filipino renditions of religious genres. Ecclesiastical occasions should be celebrated with solemnity and should not provide opportunities for entertainment, laughter and worldliness ([76], pp. 371–72). Underlying all these rulings was the ongoing debate about the extent to which the universal missionary enterprise should allow the continuation of practices and customs that originated from non-Christian traditions. Although the devout Filipino nun, Martha de San Bernardo, was among those sent to Macau in 1633 to establish a foundation ([45], pp. 68–69), there are many counter-stories as well. Lucia de Los Reyes, a *beata* (a member of the Third Order of pious lay women) reportedly experienced a state of ecstasy compared to that of Saint Teresa, but Church officials regarded this as dangerously close to the trances of indigenous spirit mediums. Lucia was accused of heresy and taken to Mexico to stand trial as a heretic ([80], pp. 120–21).

The chronological justification for different periodizations has long been debated, although most historians have cautiously accepted the idea of an “early modern” period characterized by increasing world-wide connections. Its boundaries, however, are fluid and in Southeast Asia there is a clear continuum between the global-local interaction of pre-nineteenth century missionizing and that which followed during the “colonial period”. For example, the Spanish authorities and the Catholic hierarchy in the Philippines regarded, the leader of a locally-formed *Cofradia* de San Jose, Apolinario de la Cruz (1815–41), as a heretic because his Christianity incorporated many pre-Christian practices, such as the use of talismans and because his followers venerated him as Christ-like ([77], pp. 29–62). Captured after an anti-Spanish uprising, he was summarily executed. In a similar vein, Dutch reformed ministers denounced the “Apostle of Java,” Kiai Sadrach (c.1835–1924) as a false teacher because he presented Christianity as a form of Javanese esoteric wisdom ([61], p. 642). In mid nineteenth-century Timor, returning Dutch Jesuits were appalled at the extent to which local communities, once under the Portuguese but left for two generations without priests, had reshaped Iberian Catholic rituals in accordance with their own Animistic culture. Measures were quickly put in place to bring these “baptized heathens” back to the fold and to foster the more restrained style of northern European Catholicism. In the history of Christian evangelism the definition of globalization proposed by Giddens thus requires some modification. The new relationships that European Christianity introduced

undoubtedly contributed to the shaping of “local happenings” in Southeast Asia, but the “vice versa” of religious influences is difficult to discern. ([3], p. 64).

#### 4. Conclusions

This article began by noting the expansion of the theoretical literature that has focused on the implications of globalization’s penetration into local environments. Although the concept of “glocalization” has proved useful in the sociology of religion, it has been largely applied in relation to developments in modern times. By contrast, this discussion has moved chronologically backwards to consider the nature of Christian missionizing in the early modern period and the implications of elevating Christianity into a universal faith. The expansion of European commercial interests into Asia, the Americas and Africa was commonly justified by the biblical injunction to spread Christian teachings, and by the “civilizing” influences that would then be fostered. In his global project Christianization was underwritten by the belief that teachings and practices which had evolved in Europe could be successfully transported to very different environments. The early modern period was a critical period in Christianity’s claim to be a “world” religion, but in Southeast Asia as elsewhere, responses to the missionizing endeavour varied from negotiation and acceptance to apathy and outright resistance. The transmission of what was seen as a universal message was complicated by the goal of imposing European economic control, by the opposition this generated, and by competition with other religions and among Christians themselves. In this often antagonistic environment, the degree to which a global product could be “repackaged”—i.e., glocalized—so that it was cross-culturally appealing was always constrained, even among the most sympathetic purveyors.

Within the framework of studies on religious globalization, Southeast Asia is particularly interesting because here we can compare different interpretations of Christianity, notably Catholicism and Protestantism, and contrast the boundaries that were imposed on glocalization. While it can be argued that Catholicism was generally more successful in this regard, we can also see continuing debates between the religious orders, and between Iberian Catholics and their northern European counterparts. Western imperialism and the imposition of colonialism over much of nineteenth-century Southeast Asia raised new questions about the extent to which a culturally-adapted Christian “brand” could be propagated by local congregations and the degree to which indigenous iterations were permissible. Arguments about the acceptability of what is often termed “inculturation” have continued into modern times, but the association with the West means that some societies still regard Christianity as a “foreign” religion, despite its long regional presence. An appreciation of the complex entwining of local and global, and the variety of different forms that this could take, must therefore underpin any study of Southeast Asia’s religious history. Such an appreciation supports the proposition that the glocalization of Christianity in the early modern set up “power-laden tensions” which both global institutions and dispersed consumers continue to negotiate ([21], p. 57).

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